



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
SECTOR NEW ORLEANS
200 HENDEE STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70114
[REDACTED]



U.S. COAST GUARD INTERVIEW

Matter under Investigation: The sinking of towing vessel ALTON ST. AMANT on 17 May 2020 at the Bollinger Quick Repair Yard in Harvey, Louisiana.

Interview of: Kevin Bankston, Blessey Marine Services Port Engineer and Project Manager

Date: 1 June 2020

Location: Bollinger Quick Repair Yard, Harvey, LA.

Interviewed by: LT [REDACTED]

Interview Summary:

Kevin Bankston has worked for Blessey Marine Services for approximately three years, most recently as a Port Engineer. Mr. Bankston is responsible for keeping track of the budget and work schedule for vessels in maintenance periods.

The ALTON ST. AMANT arrived to Bollinger Quick Repair Yard for a scheduled maintenance period. At the time of the incident, the maintenance period was nearly complete. The vessel had come off of drydock and spent the previous week in the water at the Bollinger facility, completing final repair items. A normal maintenance period for towing vessels is approximately 45 days. During this time, the scope of work conducted onboard brings the vessel into compliance with Coast Guard regulations, in addition to other necessary repairs.

Up until the incident, Mr. Bankston did not note anything abnormal regarding the maintenance period or the relationship between Blessey and Bollinger Quick Repair Yard employees. Blessey has a long standing relationship with Bollinger, and often brings its vessels to Bollinger repair yards for maintenance.

At 0700 on the morning of May 17, 2020, he received a call that the ALTON ST. AMANT was taking on water at the pier and going down. At 0900, Mr. Bankston arrived at Bollinger Quick Repair. Mr. Bankston observed that vessel was approximately submerged 80-90% to where it ultimately made contact with the bottom of the canal. Mr. Bankston observed that the water level was slightly above the second deck of the vessel. Over the course of the morning, crew from Blessey, Bollinger, and local salvage companies worked to stabilize the vessel, ultimately preparing for refloat operations. Once the vessel was refloated in the afternoon, there were no additional signs of water intrusion while the vessel remained in the water. The vessel was then brought onto drydock for inspection.

Mr. Bankston and other members of the responding crew went onboard to assess the extent of the water intrusion and also to determine the source of the flooding. A visual inspection was completed of the hull and did not result in the discovery of any hull punctures or other likely sources of water intrusion.



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On Saturday morning, May 16th, contractors were onboard the vessel conducting engine alignment. In order to conduct an accurate alignment, fuel was already onboard and the potable water tanks were to be filled at least half way. When Mr. Bankston arrived on scene on the 17th, he noticed that the potable water hose was still attached to the vessel, but the shut-off valve had been actuated.

Mr. Bankston couldn't be sure as to the status of all hatch covers on the vessel but stated that normally tank hatch covers are removed during yard periods so that the tanks can be inspected daily by the shipyard's competent person.

Lastly, Mr. Bankston provided that the vessel's bilge alarm system was turned off while work was being conducted on the system.

LT [REDACTED]
U.S. Coast Guard
Sector New Orleans